

This year the Folklife Festival marks its 50th Anniversary, and the youth performers of Circus Juventas will be sharing their artistry with hundreds of thousands of visitors in performances throughout the two weeks of the festival.

The founders of Circus Juventas, Dan and Betty Butler, not only build confidence and excellence in their students through a multicultural circus arts education, but also inspire more than 50,000 audience members every year with their professional-level performances. Circus Juventas is a key member of the vibrant arts community in Minnesota's 4th District.

Since its founding in 1994, Circus Juventas has grown into the largest performing arts circus school in North America. Over 2,500 students participate in their year round and summer camp programs. The students of Circus Juventas learn world-class skills in traditional and contemporary circus arts. As these young people come together to put on their collaborative *cirque nouveau* performances, they also learn the values of teamwork, self-confidence, discipline, dedication, leadership, and collaboration.

As their Member of Congress, I commend all the students of Circus Juventas and Dan and Betty Butler as they bring their renowned performances and community engagement to the National Mall as the Folklife Festival celebrates the Circus Arts.

The creativity that they inspire and the connections they build are a gift to our community, and we are all proud of their chance to share those gifts on a national stage.

IN TRIBUTE TO SISTER JOEL  
READ

**HON. GWEN MOORE**

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 29, 2017*

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sister Joel Read who has served as a mentor, teacher, college professor, a fierce advocate for women's rights and academic administrator. She was the longtime leader of Alverno College and her vision of placing abilities over grades put her among the nation's top college innovators. Sister Joel Read died, May 25, 2017 at the age of 91 years.

Sister Read led her alma mater for nearly 35 years. The women's college located on Milwaukee's south side reflected her trailblazing approach. The depth of her influence reached far beyond the Alverno campus because of her involvement not only in local and national academic issues, but also due to her international network of contacts. She oversaw multi-million dollar fund raising campaigns that expanded the campus footprint, as well as scholarship and academic offerings. Under her leadership, Alverno launched one of the first internship programs in the country and initiated Weekend College targeted at working women. Sister Read focused on students developing abilities, rather than making grades to demonstrate skills and knowledge. The distinctive ability-based, "assessment-as-learning" curriculum approach introduced in 1973, still draws educators from around the world to visit Alverno.

She was a member of the School Sisters of St. Francis since 1945. She was a fierce ad-

vocate for women's rights and was one of the founders of the National Organization for Women in 1966. President Gerald Ford appointed her to the National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year in 1975. National leaders in political and education circles also sought her counsel. President Jimmy Carter appointed her to the National Council on the Humanities. Presidents George H.W. Bush, George W. Bush and Bill Clinton invited her to the White House to discuss educational policy. She was singled out as one of a handful of college presidents who broke educational ground in the past 100 years, in the book, "The Many Lives of Academic Presidents".

Alverno College has opened doors to those who did not see college in their future. Alverno's enrollment is roughly 2,200. Forty-five percent of the undergrad population comes from the city of Milwaukee, and 44 percent are women of color. Nearly seven in 10 are first-generation college students. Alverno consistently receives high ratings in US News & World Report. A 2015 report by The Education Trust found Alverno had both the highest percentage (36.2 percent) of federal Pell Grant recipients and minority undergrads (35.7 percent) among Wisconsin colleges and universities. Pell Grants provide need-based grants to low-income students.

She retired as President of Alverno College in 2003 having served as one of the nation's longest serving college presidents and remained an energetic force in retirement. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize Sister Joel Read. She has left a legacy of advocacy and compassion. She was a true trailblazer. The citizens of the Fourth Congressional District, the State of Wisconsin and the nation have benefited tremendously from her dedicated service. I am honored for these reasons to pay tribute to Sister Joel Read.

INTRODUCTION OF THE TRANS-  
FORM STUDENT DEBT TO HOME  
EQUITY ACT

**HON. MARCY KAPTUR**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 29, 2017*

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce the Transform Student Debt to Home Equity Act of 2017—a bill that enables graduates to transform their student debt into an opportunity to purchase and own a home.

With an estimated \$1.3 trillion student debt owed to the federal government, plunging homeownership rates among young people, and 17.2 million habitable homes sitting vacant in the United States, our nation must find a way to address the student debt vs. housing conundrum. Luckily, there is a popular lending instrument already in widespread use that could serve as a significant bridge to the future: the home mortgage. This common lending tool, overtime, has the power to transform student loan repayments into a financial instrument for building equity: the home.

Creating a path for credit worthy student debt holders to convert their debt payment stream into home equity would require many federal departments to collaborate. However, an initial effort to test the concept can take the form of a pilot program through the Depart-

ment of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA).

This is what the Transform Student Debt to Home Equity Act achieves. The bill authorizes HUD and FHFA to establish a pilot that connects creditworthy federal student debt holders with housing properties for sale but held by the federal government. By arranging financing that recalculates terms, debt-to-income ratios, interest rates, and other factors, short-term student debt could transition into longer-term home ownership. Eventually, participants would help restore neighborhoods, and buoy property values locally and on the federal ledger simply by maintaining and investing in a home mortgage.

The status quo has created a permanent class of millions of student debtors without the opportunity for equity homeownership. We have the resources, the power, and a compelling economic interest to do something about it.

Let's get started. I encourage my colleagues to support this measure and unleash this debt stranglehold on the next generation.

CONGRATULATING NEW YORK  
CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL DEBATE  
CHAMPIONS FOR 2016 AND 2017—  
MIDDLE SCHOOL 50

**HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 29, 2017*

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride and honor that I rise to congratulate the students, and teachers from Middle School 50 (MS 50)—the John D. Wells School on its successful reign as New York City Middle School Debate Champions for 2016 and 2017.

MS 50 is located in the Southside of Williamsburg, Brooklyn of my district. It serves students from 6th thru 8th grade and has an enrollment that is 82 percent Latino with 21 percent of the students being English Language Learners. Despite personal challenges, these students have persevered and are competitive debaters. The school's debate program has helped students develop lifelong skills like critical thinking, verbal and written communication, leadership, teamwork, and determination. They understand that debate is an art form that requires the tactful ability to argue or refute a policy while maintaining proper decorum.

Today, debate remains the bedrock of our constitution and political system. It is uplifting to know that these students recognize the power of words and understand the art of debate. I am extremely proud of them. I also want to recognize and commend Principal Ben Honoroff, Debate Coaches Jason Warren, Matthew Mason, Thuy-An Vo, Andrew Geathers, and Carolina Hidalgo, and teachers for their support of this program and working with the Middle School Quality Initiative, a New York City Department of Education program focused on preparing middle school students for college. Please join me in saluting the MS 50 Debate New York City Champion Debate Team of 2016 and 2017.

Kevin Ascension, Jusue Canatero Nixon, Brandy Flores, Anthony Imbert, Kelvin Imbert,

A-Tiyana Johnson, Leslie Malin, Tracey McKeever, Victoria Paredes, Reynaldo Ramos, Grant Shan, Daiana Valencia, Emma Pichardo, Crisagnelly Canario, Tarek Ali, Denise Merino, Bryan Jacinto, Mohammed Islam, Evelis Rodriguez.

Deirra DuBois, Samantha Espinal, Quanique Walker, Yariel Cruz Hernandez, Solina Perez, Heaven Nesbitt, Wendy Calderon, Ariel Roman, Trystan Keohane, Michel Reyes, Fernando Espinal, Dawlin Paredes, Carlos Francisco, Merelin Penalo, Lisa Diaz, Lesly Deleon Clemente, Albert Sanchez, Yisneiry Rodriguez.

NATIONAL HOMEOWNERSHIP  
MONTH 2017

**HON. JOYCE BEATTY**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 29, 2017*

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a member of the House Committee on Financial Services' Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance in recognition of June as National Homeownership Month.

For many families across this country, homeownership is the cornerstone of achieving their American Dream.

It has proven to be one of the most effective ways for lower-and middle-income families to build wealth.

Unfortunately, nearly a decade after the 2008 Financial Crisis, realizing the American Dream is still out of reach for too many Americans due to tightened mortgage credit standards throughout the industry.

Each year, National Homeownership Month provides us the opportunity to recognize and identify the significant benefits of homeownership and the resources needed to help more Americans become homeowners.

In that spirit, it is equally important that we continue to support efforts to improve financial literacy in the home buying process through the many housing counseling programs across the country.

That is why I introduced the Housing Financial Literacy Act, H.R. 851, which will help make homeownership a reality for more families by giving first-time homebuyers who complete a Department of Housing and Urban Development-certified housing counseling course a discount on their Federal Housing Administration mortgage insurance premium of 25 basis points.

Let's make the American Dream of homeownership accessible for more Americans this National Homeownership Month and every month throughout the year.

RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF TRAFFORD REALTY CO.

**HON. BILL POSEY**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 29, 2017*

Mr. POSEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to the attention of my colleagues a true success story in the world of American small business. Trafford Realty Co., based in Brevard County, Florida, is celebrating its 100th Anniversary, a true milestone for any small business.

In 1917, A. R. "Roy" Trafford and Russell Field opened Trafford and Field Realtors in Historic Cocoa Village to serve the residents of the City of Cocoa and the Brevard County community. Years later, Roy's son Al became Trafford's president and continued to lead the organization until 2009 at which time, at the age of 94, he promoted vice president and general manager Terry Lolmaugh to the position of president. Al continued to be active in the company until his passing in 2014 at the age of 99.

To recognize his many contributions to our community, the City of Cocoa renamed its amphitheater at Cocoa Riverfront Park to the Al Trafford Amphitheater in 2009.

Trafford Realty Co.'s leadership has witnessed the growth of Brevard County, from an area originally known for commercial fishing, citrus, and tourism to the center for space exploration. The company has survived and prospered through every national and local event of the 20th and 21st centuries, successfully enduring the effects of World Wars, economic depressions and recessions, local natural disasters, and man-made catastrophes.

Trafford Realty Co. has managed the sales and purchases of thousands of homes and commercial properties in Brevard County, and was instrumental in the development of some of Brevard County's most well-known subdivisions dating from 1924 through the 1970s, including: Carleton Terrace, Riverview Acres and Hardee Circle, Cocoa Isles, South Merritt Estates, and The Ranches.

Trafford Realty Co. has over 20 professional associates. Together, they have more than 345 years in cumulative real estate selling and buying experience. The Trafford Realty Co. prides itself on its experience, integrity and longevity. It will continue to serve the residents and businesses of Brevard County, with a reputation as one of our most trusted and respected businesses.

I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting Trafford Realty and its employees for their continuing contributions to our community and for achieving 100 successful years in business.

CONGRATULATING JEREMY BOWDEN ON WINNING THE CONGRESSIONAL ART CONTEST FOR THE 24TH DISTRICT OF TEXAS

**HON. KENNY MARCHANT**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 29, 2017*

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jeremy Bowden for his winning piece in the Congressional Art Competition for the 24th District of Texas. Jeremy's artwork, titled "Lazy Day in Downtown Carrollton," is an oil painting of the center of Carrollton, Texas, where Jeremy lives with his fraternal twin brother Jason, his sister Kyra, and his parents Rhonda and Blake. The Congressional Art Competition is a great chance for students such as Jeremy to showcase their artistic talents and attain national recognition for their work.

As a child, Jeremy's strong interest in art, particularly drawing, was clear to Rhonda and Blake. His parents note that, from a young age, Jeremy had always been able to enter-

tain himself with only a pencil and paper. This interest became even more prominent during parent-teacher conferences, where Rhonda and Blake learned that Jeremy had a habit of drawing and doodling on everything he could get his hands on, including homework and essays.

It wasn't until high school, however, that Jeremy decided to take his interest in art seriously. Once he dedicated himself, he spent numerous hours in art lessons and working on art projects, submitting a few of these pieces in competitions. Some of these projects included work in animation, figure drawings, oil paintings, as well as sculptures. During his junior year in high school, his hard work and dedication to becoming a more skilled artist gained him some prestigious recognitions, including winning the 24th Congressional District of Texas Art Competition.

After Jeremy completes his senior year at Hebron High School, he hopes to attend an art college in the fall of 2018 to continue pursuing his goal of becoming a professional artist. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Jeremy on winning the Congressional Art Contest for the 24th District of Texas. I ask all of my distinguished colleagues to join me in wishing Jeremy the best of luck in his future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING THE BIRTHDAY OF LUCI BAINES JOHNSON, THE YOUNGER DAUGHTER OF U.S. PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON AND HIS WIFE, FORMER FIRST LADY, LADY BIRD JOHNSON

**HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 29, 2017*

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, along with Congressman BARTON, to recognize the birthday of Luci Baines Johnson. Ms. Luci Baines Johnson is the Chairwoman of LBJ Holding Co. She also serves as Vice President of The Business Suites and as a Director of LBJ Broadcasting Co. Ms. Johnson is also a member of the Board of Directors of the National Wildflower Research Center, a member of the advisory boards of both the Center for Battered Women and of "Believe in Me", and a life trustee of Seton Fund. After many years of service, we are pleased to recognize her today. On Sunday, July 2, 2017, she will be celebrating her 70th birthday.

Ms. Johnson has degrees from Georgetown University School of Nursing, the University of Texas, and St. Edward's University. Ms. Johnson has served as a Trustee of Boston University, is a past chairman of the Affiliate Fund-raising Drive for the American Heart Association, a former chairman of the University of Texas System School of Nursing, and a former member of the Board of Review of the National League of Nursing.

Through our shared passion for public service, we have developed a close relationship that continues to grow stronger by the year. Much like her parents before her, she has dedicated her life to public service and it has been an honor to see the contributions she has made throughout the state of Texas.

Throughout her life, she has constantly displayed the virtues of compassion, passion,